



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
730 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA 02476
Phone: 781-316-3000

webmaster@town.arlington.ma.us

Redevelopment Board Minutes 03/10/2008

Arlington Redevelopment Board
 Minutes of March 10, 2008

Members Present: Christopher Loreti
 Andrew West
 Edward Tsoi
 Roland Chaput
 Bruce Fitzsimmons

Also Present: Kevin J. O'Brien

Andrew West called the meeting to order at 7:05. He recognized Michele Barry and BethAnn Friedman from the Symmes Neighborhood Advisory Committee (SNAC). Kevin O'Brien distributed to the Board copies of SNAC's running list of concerns. Michele Barry spoke about the communications process and how she encourages people to call John Greeley of Symmes Redevelopment Associates directly when they have a question or problem. She indicated that the upcoming blasting and rock processing were causing neighbors to be apprehensive. Michele expressed disappointment about the process by which the Woodside Lane sidewalk issue was handled. Kevin O'Brien explained that since the vote of abutting property owners was tied at 7 to 7, the developer had fulfilled its obligation and the ARB's involvement was completed. The Town Manager has asked the developer to consider building the sidewalk anyway. BethAnn Friedman suggested that a bike lane / walkway could be painted on the street which could be widened in places. It would be plowed and could provide some security without abutters having to shovel a sidewalk or lose parking spaces.

Michele Barry spoke of the lack of communication by the town concerning the erection of the temporary cell tower at the Symmes construction site. She felt that the neighbors should have been notified ahead of time. She noted that in general communications among SNAC, SRA, and the Designated Town Representative were working well and expressed appreciation for the responsiveness of John Greeley and Kevin Nigro. Ed Tsoi observed that the communication seemed to be working well. Chris Loreti asked that ARB members be added to the list to receive the Designated Town Representative's reports electronically. Michele Barry indicated that a future concern will be the additional children who will enter the schools from the development.

At 7:45, Andrew West recognized Doug Manz from Symmes Redevelopment Associates (SRS). He explained the schedule for them to pull building permits. He pointed out that the schedule had been requested by the Building Department and was somewhat at odds with SRA's obligation under the terms of the Land Disposition Agreement. He presented a letter requesting that the Board agree to the schedule the Town had requested. He presented a second letter requesting a nine month extension of the time that SRA may continue to hold the MOB site and attempt to develop a medical use.

Ed Tsoi observed that there seemed to be a shift in the delivery of medical services in neighborhoods and maybe a medical office building may not be the most appropriate use now. Andrew West suggested that they look at the market and report what interest there is in medical services. Michele Barry suggested that they look at what medical services are needed in the community and suggested that the ARB work with SNAC in exploring other uses.

Andrew West suggested the Board deal with the building permit issue. Kevin O'Brien suggested that the Board authorize him to send the following letter to Symmes Redevelopment Associates.

"By letter dated March 7, 2008, you have indicated that you have reached agreement with the Town of Arlington Building Department regarding the timing and sequence of the issuance of building permits for the Symmes project, Arlington 360. It is our understanding that the schedule was requested by the Arlington Town Manager and is as follows.

1. All foundation building permits to be issued by March 29, 2008
2. All remaining building permits to be issued by July 30, 2008

Please be advised that by a vote at its meeting of March 10, 2008, the Arlington Redevelopment Board approves the schedule of building permits issuance, and notwithstanding the language of Section 5(a) of the Land Disposition Agreement, finds Symmes Redevelopment Associates to be in compliance with said document."

Bruce Fitzsimmons moved that the Board authorize its secretary to send the above letter. Ed Tsoi seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

Chris Loreti then suggested that the Board explore with Town Meeting the concept of expanding the possible uses that could be located on the MOB site and suggested extending SRA's control of the site six months and then look at it again after Town Meeting expresses its will. He suggested that there needn't be a warrant article, the Board could just ask for a sense of the Town Meeting. He pointed out that the existing direction to the ARB saying it must return to Town Meeting in order to locate a use other than medical office on the site was a resolution and not warrant article.

Roland Chaput indicated that he would feel much better if the ARB got an indication from Town Meeting. Kevin O'Brien suggested that he would confer with the Manager and Town Counsel and perhaps the Town Moderator to see the way they wanted to handle it. Ed Tsoi thinks that the medical office use is open to interpretation. Ed Tsoi moved that the ARB extend SRA's control of the MOB site by nine months. Roland Chaput seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

Doug Manz said he will report to the Board what they find out in the market. Michele Barry asked what she should communicate to the neighborhood and Ed Tsoi suggested that she ask people how they felt about broadening the type of use that could locate at the MOB site.

Andrew West then asked the Board to turn its attention to the warrant article it submitted that asks Town Meeting to petition the legislature for home rule legislation to make any housing the Town is able to create and make affordable for families making up to 120% of median income include restrictions that will make them affordable in perpetuity (Warrant Article 15). Town Counsel, John Maher, asked that the Board communicate to the Selectmen its support for the article. Chris Loreti moved that the Board express its support for article 15. Roland Chaput seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

Andrew West then brought up the request by East Cambridge Savings Bank to modify its signage which is currently allowed by special permit. No representative of the bank was present so the Board asked staff to meet with them and get a thorough understanding of the new proposal and report back to the Board.

The Board then turned its attention to draft warrant articles and made some changes in the draft Zoning Bylaw language to be reviewed at the public hearing Monday night.

After reviewing the minutes, Roland Chaput moved that the Board approve the minutes of its meeting of February 4, 2008. Ed Tsoi seconded the motion and the board voted 5 to 0 in favor.

After a short discussion about the Commercial Revitalization Initiative, the Board adjourned the meeting at 11:10PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin J. O'Brien